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Essay
on
Acute Hepatitis
By
Ezra Henry Bradley
of
Virginia—

Passed March 20th 1823

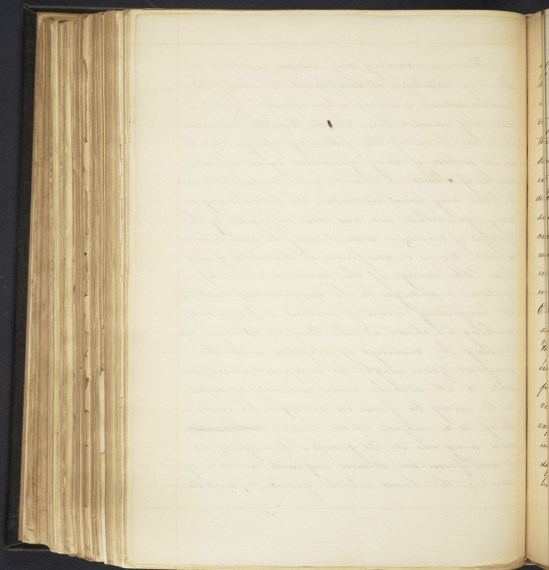
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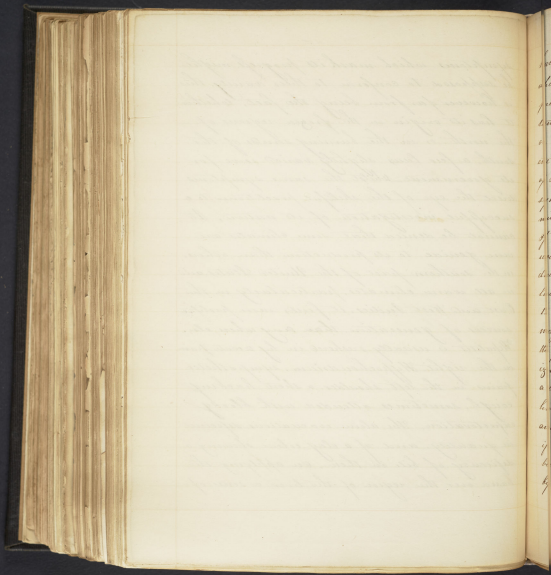
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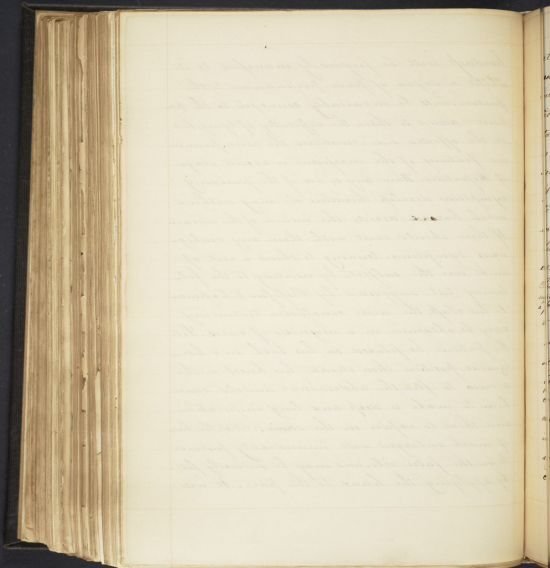
There is scarcely any disease exhibited in the long catalogue of complaints to which the human system is subject, whose character is more distinctly marked than Acute Hepatitis, designed to be the theme of the following essay. Capable in its nature of being generated by an infinite number of causes, it cannot with propriety be said to have any local residence. On the contrary, in every region, whose soil has been impoisoned by the footsteps of civilized man, it may be said to have a home. Nor is it confined to the walks of civil life. The savage of the desert, a child of nature, a stranger to the luxuries exhibited in the banqueting rooms of modern refinement, slaking his thirst at the limpid stream, appeasing the cravings of appetite with the simplest fare, might be supposed, invulnerable to its attacks, comparatively exempt as he may be from its ravages, he, nevertheless, is a subject of its power, ~~and may~~ and may die in its grasp—Springing as it does from an almost infinite number of sources, the laws which govern it are the



symptoms which mark its progress, might
be supposed to conform to their variety, this
is however far from being the fact, whether
it has its origin in the frozen regions of
the north, or in the burning sands of the
south, a few laws slightly varied, serve for
its government, whilst the same symptoms
direct the eye of the skillful practitioner to a
successful investigation of its nature. It
cannot be denied that some climates are
more genial to its production than others,
in the southern part of the United States, and
in all warm climates, particularly in the
East and West Indies, it finds more prolific
sources of generation, than any where else.
Hepatitis is usually ushered in by acute pain
in the right Hypochondrium, sympathetic
pains in the left shoulder, a short hacking
cough, sometimes attended with bloody
expectoration, The alvine evacuations, deficient
in quantity, and of a clay colour, showing a
deficiency of bile in them, on applying the
hand over the region of the liver, a sense of



hardness will be frequently manifest to it
whilst a degree of pain, proportionate to the
pressure, will be invariably conveyed to the pa-
tient. added to these the difficulty of lying, but
on the affected side, constitutes the more promi-
nent features of the incipient or acute stage
of Hepatitis. When any or all of the preceding
symptoms develop themselves we may without
much hazard decide the nature of the disease
if there should exist with them any ambig-
uous symptoms, tending to throw a veil of
doubt over the subject, by resorting to the fol-
lowing test suggested by Professor Chapman
to his class, the most conclusive testimony
may be obtained in a majority of cases. Let
the patient be placed on his back in a hor-
izontal position, then elevate his knees, with
a view to flex the abdominal muscles, cause
him to make a deep and long inspiration
and then to expire in the same position, the liver
if much enlarged will immediately protrude
below the false ribs, and may be distinctly felt
by applying the hand to the part. It will

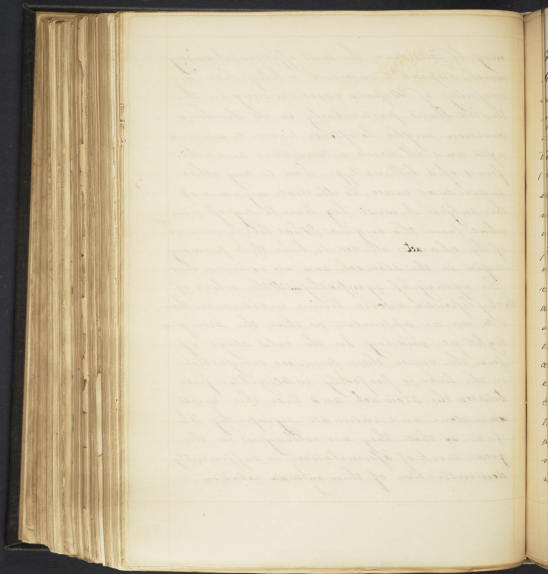


at once suggest itself, that although the plan recommended by Professor Chapman, however certain it may be to detect any extensive affection of the liver, is wholly incompetent to the task, in its incipient stage, when its progress is necessarily small. Thus, that although we may decide with certainty on its Hepatic character if the symptoms can be felt, we are not hastily to determine against its existence, in the absence of that decisive symptom. Since there are but few diseases with which it can be confounded, (indeed I know of but one, and that is Plethoric Pulmonitis) we may safely in the presence of a ^{supervening number} of the symptoms already mentioned, proceed to treat it for Hepatitis. In doing so we cannot materially err, for the symptoms in the incipient stage of both diseases, indicate the same mode of treatment. — Of the remote causes chiefly concerned in its production, exposure to either an excess of either heat or cold, violent exercise, immoderate indulgence of animal appetite in eating or drinking particularly the latter, or any cause calculated to weaken the powers of vitality

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may be considered the most efficient, I am very much disposed to entertain a belief, that a majority of Hepatic cases occurring in the United States, particularly in its Southern division, might be often traced to mismanaged and ill cured intermittent and other fevers of a bilious type, than to any other individual cause. To illustrate my views of this subject I must beg leave to digress somewhat from the original, That febrile diseases of the character alluded to, have their primary origin in the stomach, and are extended thro'

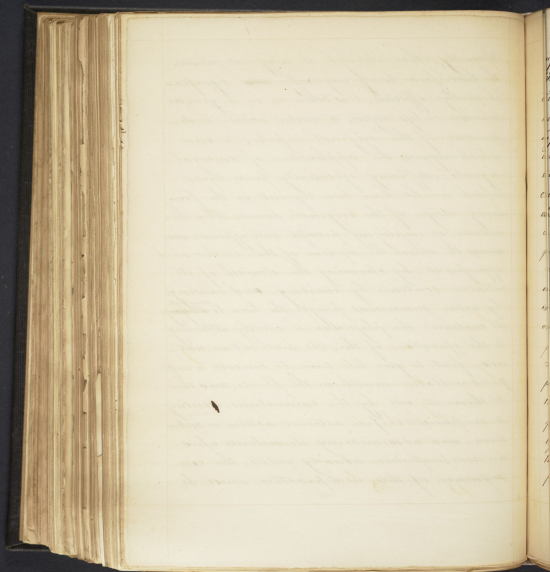
The agency of sympathy, till the whole of the chylific viscera become involved in them. It is to me as apparent as that the sun gives light at midday. In the cold stage of fever, the cause that produces congestion in the liver is perfectly intelligible - first between the stomach and liver, there exists an accident and intimate sympathy. The fact, of that they are colleagues in the great work of assimilation, is sufficiently demonstrative of their intimate relation.



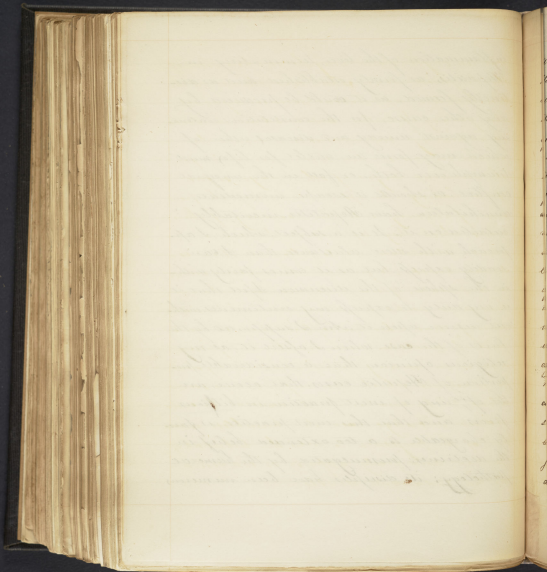
The gown of fever, then having been applied to the stomach, and operating, as a powerful and morbid stimulus upon it, its healthy action is for a moment suspended, or in other words a diseased usurps the place of its healthy action. The surface sympathises with it, the blood (as is evident from the palid appearance it presents) actives from it and is precipitated to the interior, congestion in the liver is the inevitable consequence, which being already predisposed to disease, is the more susceptible to morbid impression. But it may be enquired, is not this stage succeeded by a hot one and is not that in turn succeeded by a sweating one, at the expiration of which healthy action is restored, and healthy action being perfectly restored, is it not evident that disease has been eradicated. First I reply, by stating ~~the~~ simple fact that the disease has a constitutional predilection to return after a definite interruption, and its returning is proof that morbid action has only been suspended.

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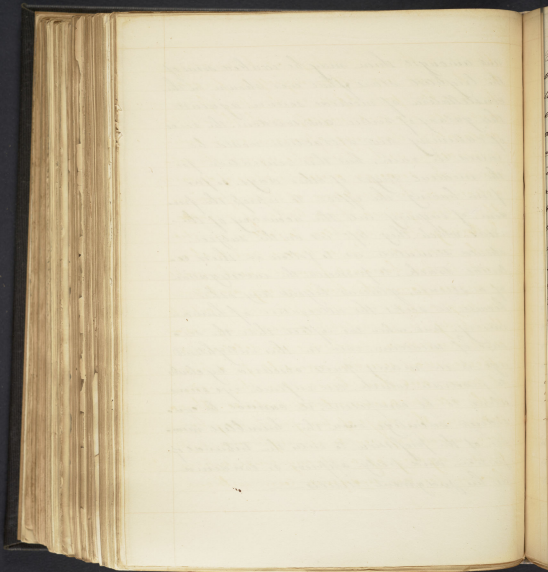
Secondly, that although it may not return, the liver, from being originally, ~~and~~ sympathetically affected, has taken on in a greater measure or less degree, a morbid action independent of the original impulse; to cure which requires the application of remedial agents, differing essentially from those which would have been required in the forming stage of the original disease. When, then, instead of employing prompt and efficient measures to relieve the system of the burden which oppresses it, by cleansing the stomach of its vitiated contents by vomiting, and causing, by action, mercurial purges, the liver to ~~discharge~~ ^{empty} its contents; the physician is silently attending to the operation of the vis medicatrix naturæ, first to give her time to concoct a supposed vitiated matter in the fluids, and then to throw it out by the excretories, ~~porting~~ to diaphoretics, before arterial action is subdued, and administering stimulants when an overproportion already exists; the consequence of this mispractice must be



inflammation of the liver, terminating in
Hepatitis, as firmly established and as dis-
tinctly formed, as it could be produced by
any other cause, for the constitution continu-
ing against remedy and disease either of
which may form an outlet for life, must
triumph over both, or fall in the unequal
conflict, or should it escape immediate
annihilation, have Hepatitis, inevitably
entailed on it. It is a subject, which I ap-
proach with more reluctance than I can
readily express, but as it comes fairly with-
in the sphere of the discussion, I feel that it
is my duty to express my sentiments, with-
out reserve upon it, and I supported by the
facts of the case, when I assert it, as my
religious opinion, that a considerable por-
tion of Hepatic cases, that occur, are
the offspring of inert practice in bilious
fevers, and that this inert practice is fair-
ly chargeable to a too extended belief in
the doctrines, promulgated by the humoral
pathology; its disciples have been numerous



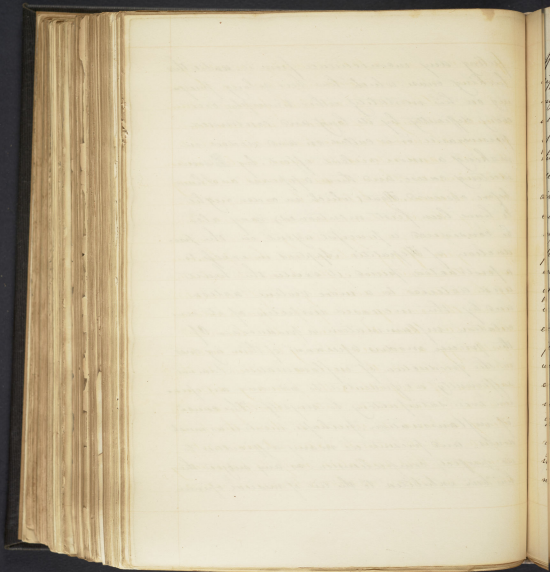
and amongst them may be ranked some of the brightest stars that ever shone in the constellation of medical science, against this galaxy of virtue and wisdom, the voice of calumny and detraction would be raised in vain, but this veneration for the medical sages of other days, so far from having the effect to repress the freedom of enquiry into the accuracy of the views which they left us on the subject, should stimulate us, to follow in their celestial track, to prosecute the investigation of a science, glorious beyond any other—because it seeks the alleviation of human misery, and when we reflect that the science of medicine, even in this enlightened age is in many parts, obscured by clouds to penetrate which our infinite eye seems alone to be competent, it cannot be considered sacrilege even the humblest member of the profession, to enter the tribunal of justice, and freely approve or condemn as his judgment directs—



This is a theme boundless as the universe
but I must not allow myself to forget
the humble space I fill in the profession
and will content myself with the simple
declaration, that my opinions are in entire
coincidence with those who regard the sol-
ids as the sovereign disseminators of disease
action, to the adoption of these opinions
I have been guided by a light of irrevocable
brilliance, to be enabled to follow in the
path irradiated by its beams, and to shine
with lustre borrowed from its inexhaustible
resources forms the limits of my ambition.
The long and continued application of cold to
the body is inevitably followed by vis-
ceral congestion, sometimes its deleterious
effects may remain invisible for a length
of time, and then burst upon the view
with all its accumulated violence. Thus a
man in the days of his youth may have
been much exposed to its influence, and
by the agency of a strong constitution
live on for an indefinite term without

the is a fine family with many
fine young men who are engaged in
the study of law in the University
and who are distinguished by their
talents. The young ladies are also
well educated and are engaged in
the study of the sciences. The
family is of a high social position
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The father is a distinguished lawyer
and the mother is a lady of high
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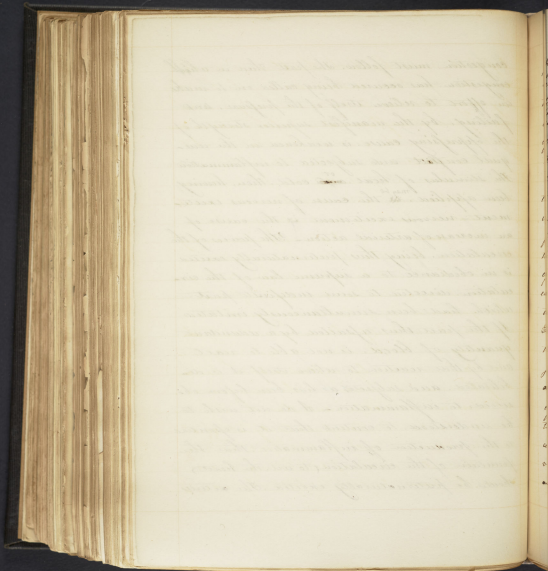
feeling any inconvenience from it, until this
burning cause, which has been so long prey-
ing on his mortality, either triumphs over
every difficulty by its long and continued
perseverance, or is called on and aided in
making a more violent effort, by ~~some~~ ^{an} exciting
cause, and then appears as I have
before observed, Heat (which in order ought
to have been first mentioned) may also
be considered a powerful agent in the pro-
duction of Hepatitis. Applied in excess, to
a protracted period, it excites the heart
and arteries to a more violent action
and by the increased impetus of its cir-
culation, inflammation is produced—Of
the precise *modus operandi* of these agents
in the production of inflammation, I am not
sufficiently acquainted to advance an opin-
ion even satisfactory to myself. The cause
of inflammation, perhaps, involves as much
doubt, and presents as many difficulties to
its perfect comprehension, as any subject that
has been exhibited to the test of medical opinion



If this were not a fact, so many eminent, yet different opinions, would not exist on the same subject. That they are both powerful stimulants, existing by a power, independent of any chemical or mechanical principle, the heart and arteries to a more violent action deleterious or otherwise as circumstances may direct, I certainly believe, but a simple increase of the circulation does not constitute inflammation, a slight bodily exertion or a paroxysm of joy exhibit all these phenomena. The palpitation of the heart, the vibration of the arteries, are visible, yet inflammation is not the consequence of this puternatural excitement. Upon the ruins of the humoral pathology, a medical theory has been erected which confers on the nervous system (to the exclusion of every other) the primary disposition of diseased as well as healthy action. Being disposed to concede to them this prerogative to its utmost extent, I can easily imagine that irritation may be produced by nervous influence and that whenever it occurs

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congestion must follow. The part then in which
congestion has occurred being called on to make
an effort to relieve itself of the purpura, and
failing, by the manifest superior strength of
the opposing cause, is weakened in the un-
equal conflict and subjected to inflammation.
The stimulus of heat ~~or~~ cold, then, having
been applied, ^{may be} the cause of nervous excite-
ment - nervous excitement is the cause of
an increase of arterial action - The power of the
circulation, being thus preternaturally excited
is in obedience to a supreme law of the cir-
culation, directed to some indefinite part -
which had been simultaneously irritated.
If the part thus assailed, by a redundant
quantity of blood, is not able to react
and by that reaction to relieve itself, it is de-
bilitated, and subjected as has been before ob-
served, to inflammation - I do not wish to
be understood, to contend that it is essential
to the production of inflammation, that the
fountain of the circulation (to wit, the heart),
should be preternaturally excited. The arteries

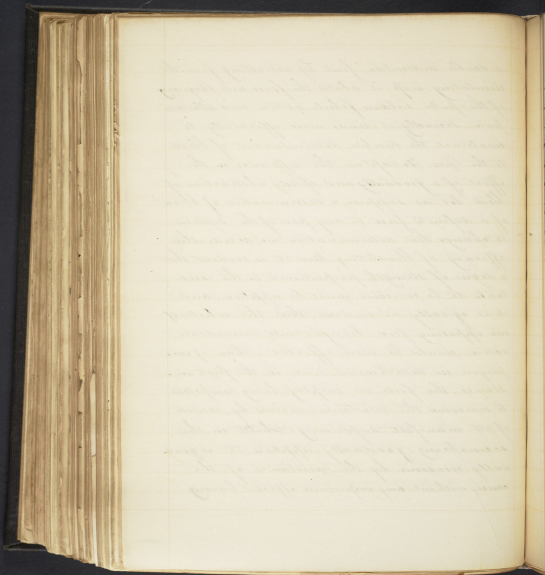


possess a power by which the blood is made to circulate in them, independent of the heart, they may therefore be preternaturally excited and produce inflammation perfectly independent of the heart or the general circulation. All this however does not explain why inflammation should locate itself in the liver, in preference to any other part, nor would I venture to affirm that it has any particular predilection for that ~~part~~, viscus. I am only advocating the opinion, that the protracted application of either heat or cold, is competent to the generation of inflammation, and that inflammation thus generated may locate itself in the liver. Perhaps I am justifiable in maintaining ~~the~~ the opinion that the liver is peculiarly subject to be injured by inflammation. Considering that inflammation is the consequence of diminished action, and that the circulation in the liver is comparatively sluggish and inactive, it will be apparent at one view, that its powers of combating disease are in the same proportion fallen, by way of

illustration, suppose that inflammation existed in every organ essential to vitality, it is not impossible, that whilst by a more active circulation every other part might be enabled to rise itself of the oppressing cause - the liver alone for the want of that activity, would remain in a diseased condition. — — —

The incipient stage of acute Hepatitis being highly inflammatory it is uniformly characterized by great febrile action, indicated by a hard, full and quick pulse, and calls loudly for the extensive adoption of the Antiphlogistic mode of treatment. Proceeding to conduct the practice upon the general principles of inflammation we should resort to copious venesection, and with a view to derive all the benefit which the remedy is competent to afford, the quantity should be large in proportion to the character of the inflammation exhibited, and it should be as suddenly abstracted as possible by opening a large vessel and a speedy drawing off the blood, its salutary effect is very much increased, Blood-letting, conducted upon these principles, answers

a double indication, first by detracting from the circulating mass, it abates the force and frequency of the pulse, subdues febrile action, and alliviams pain. Secondly, it tends more effectually to counteract the morbid determination of blood to the liver. To explain the difference in the effect of a gradually and speedily abstraction of blood. Let us suppose a determination of blood of a definite force to any part of the system to change that determination, we decide the efficacy of bloodletting. Now it is evident that a degree of strength, proportioned to the resistance to be overcome, must be applied, and it is equally as evident that the whole of our opposing force brought into immediate action, would be more effectual, than if employed in detachments. Since in the first instance, the force we employ, being competent to overcome the resistance, succeeds by reason of its manifest superiority, whilst in the second being gradually applied it is gradually overcome by the resistance of the cause, without any important effect having



been produced. I do not think, that more
conclusive proof could be obtained on any
subject, than the following fact advances in
support of the superior efficacy of drawing
blood from a large orifice. Actual experiment
shows that whilst a quantity of blood may
be drawn from a man, through a small or-
ifice, without causing him to faint, half the
quantity drawn from an orifice of increased
size will produce the effect. I have dwelt
upon this subject, because I deem it a very
important practical point. But bloodletting
valuable and indispensable as it is, in the
cure of this disease, cannot be relied on, to
the exclusion of other depletory remedies
we must therefore call ~~on~~ ⁱⁿ the aid of its
auxiliaries. The bowels will generally I might
say universally, be in a torpid condition,
oppressed with a preternatural collection
of fecal matter, which, operating as an
extraneous substance, assists in keeping
up irritation, and aggravates in no ordinary
degree, the strength of the morbid symptoms.

present in the system. The liver, the throne of the disease, oppressed with a morbid collection of bile, gives origin to symptoms, to the speedy removal of which, the attention of the skillful practitioner will be speedily called. To meet these be indications, first to remove the torpid condition of the alimentary canal, Secondly to relieve the liver of its morbid contents, and to invite a more vigorous and salutary secretion, reason points to the mercurial purgatives as the only efficacious remedies in such cases. I should choose the mild mixture of mercury to be followed by the exhibition of a dose of Elixir Rucini, in preference to any other assistant purgative. Of the use of Calomel, as a purgative, or indeed of any other remedy, in this disease, I cannot say that I speak from the conviction of experience. Judging however by its superior efficacy in restraining morbid secretion of bile, a symptom familiar in the history of intermittent fever, in which it is chiefly used on, reasoning from analogy, teaches me to place it at the

head of all unmedic agents, in the removal
of the inflammatory stage of acute Hepatitis
Nor do I believe that its virtues are confined
simply to its evacuant powers, operating by
a principle specifically its own. it evacuates
the alimentary canal, extends its influence
to the liver, causes it to pour out its vitiated
contents, to pass off by the intestines, and
stimulates it to a more natural and healthy
secretion. I may subject myself to ridicule
for laying so much emphasis on the suppo-
sed specific nature of its operation, but in
ascribing specific virtues to it, I am borne
up by the highest medical authority of
our country—(I do not mean to say that I am su-
perior in the opinion, that it exerts a specific ef-
fect on the liver, when exhibited and operating
as a purgative, But I speak from the authority
of Professor Chapman, when I say that every
remedial agent, no matter what its rank may
be, in the Materia Medica, operates in some degree
by a power specifically its own. Nature herself
testifies to the truth of this Theory, when

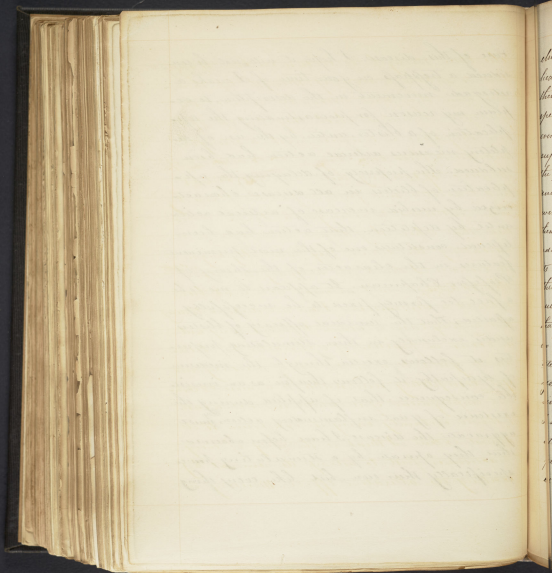
She, in her animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms, extended and diversified as they are, has with so careful a hand, distinguished them by such visible peculiarities. This plan is based on infinite wisdom, without it, all would be disorder and confusion. Why medicine alone should be excluded from it, remains to be satisfactorily explained by the opponents of the theory. That the influence of calomel (given as a purgative) on the liver, when compared with Mercury, given to produce its alterative effect or to sialivate, is inconsiderable, I most willingly concede, but that in some degree an alterative effect is produced I most firmly believe. Depletion having been extended to a sufficient degree and arterial action subdued, we may then resort to blisters, to be applied immediately over the region of the liver. Blisters applied here, acting by virtue of a stimulating principle, specifically their own, invite a determination of blood to the surface, remove morbid congestion in the liver, eradicate or relieve any ven-

nant of pain that may be present and finally
tend to break up the morbid train of actions
going on in it, and cause it to take on a
more healthy and salutary ^{action}. The plan of treat-
ment thus laid down, aided by a strict
Antiphlogistic regimen will generally succeed
in removing an acute disease of the liver, if
it is not of a constitutional or hereditary dia-
thesis, in which case it is very apt to run
on to the chronic stage. But though we may
seemingly succeed in eradicating every he-
patic symptom, I doubt the propriety of
stopping here. Inflammation of glands varies
so much from that which is common to other
parts of the system, it is so much disposed to
assume a constitutional form, that I think, some
policy strictly warrants us in resorting to the use
of mercury, to be given with a view of pre-
serving its attenuative effect. To effect this purpose
the preparation of mercury I should prefer
would be, the blue pill, to be continued until
the gums of the patient are slightly affect-
ed. In some cases I should combine with it,

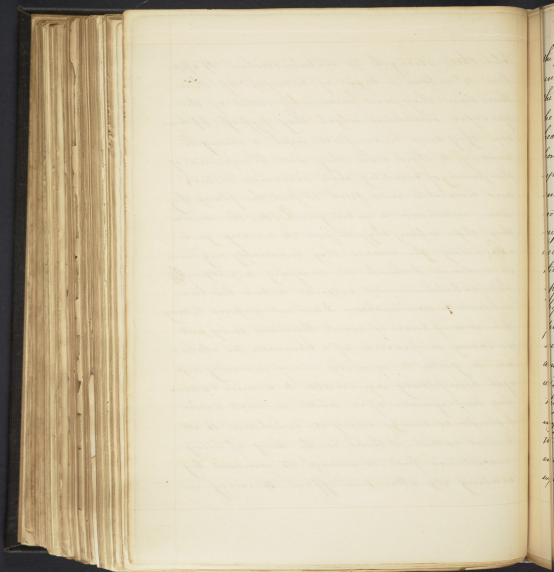
Handwritten text, likely bleed-through from the reverse side of the page. The text is written in a cursive script and is mostly illegible due to fading and the angle of the page. It appears to be a continuous paragraph or a series of connected notes.

the Nitro Muriatic acid, the so much extolled
remedy of Dr. Scott in Hepatitis, to be given as
laid down by Professor Chapman in this Ther-
apeutics. I have not intended to say that I
would postpone the application of mercury in
this disease, until the Hepatic symptoms had
entirely disappeared, on the contrary I would
resort to it as soon as the system, by active
depletory remedies, had been prepared for its
reception. my meaning is simply this, if
~~this~~ I were called to a patient labouring
under a well developed case of Hepatitis, I
would use mercury ~~mercury~~ as I have stated
though its symptoms should disappear under
the preparatory treatment. During the ex-
hibition of the mercury it will be essen-
tially necessary to keep down arterial action
else the alterative effect of the remedy can-
not be produced. To do this venesection will
be found to answer the best purpose—
Selling it to be a part of my duty to offer
something in the shape of a reason, for the
use of every remedy I have proposed, for the

case of this disease; I hope it will not be considered a trespass on your time if I make a retrograde movement in the description, to explain my reason for procrastinating the application of a blister, until by the use of depletion measures arterial action had been subdued. The propriety of delaying the application of blisters in all diseases, characterized by morbid increase of arterial action until by depletion, that action has been lessened, constitutes one of the most prominent features in the character, of the Theory of Professor Chapman. It appears to me to be a fact too firmly fixed, to be successfully disputed; That the remedial efficacy of blisters resides exclusively in their stimulating properties it follows, exerted through the medium of sympathy, it follows therefore as an inevitable consequence, that if applied during the existence of great inflammatory action, ^{they} must aggravate the disease. I have before observed that they operate by a stimulating power specifically their own. but like every thing



els. their strength is circumscribed. If applied to subvert a degree of strength less than their own. they will succeed by virtue of the specific stimulus. which they possess. If however they come in conflict with a strength superior to their own. they will be deprived of the power of exerting their remedial virtues and converted into fuel to feed the flame they were intended to extinguish. For the reason then. that where they do not ~~so~~ succeed in eradicating the disease. they invariably augment its violence. I think it necessary to postpone their exhibition. until arterial action has been subdued or diminished. I am not disposed to deny that many cases of acute Hepatitis may and do occur in practice of a character too obstinate to yield to a mild use of mercury. and yet completely amenable to a more extensive employment of it. whilst in such a case I should certainly carry its exhibition to its utmost extent. I think it the duty of every practitioner first to attempt its removal by exciting its attenuative effect. Mercury in



the present state of medical science stands
unrivaled in the Materia Medica. but I trust
the time is not far distant when disease will
be made to acknowledge the sovereignty of the
healing art without its having recourse to the
horrid effect of a salivation, from the intimate
sympathy that exists between the stomach
and liver. I have no doubt that in many if
not in all cases of acute Hepatitis, emetics
might prove highly useful. on sea voyage I
would always recommend believing as I do
that its *modus operandi* is particularly
applicable to the cure of disease, marked
by a bilious diathesis. On the subject of dia-
phoretics I have been silent, their utility in
subduing febrile action is too manifest to be
doubted and consequently venesection having
with other depleting measures, been premised
they will prove valuable auxiliaries in combat-
ing inflammatory symptoms. To meet this purpose
the Antimonial powders are prescribed, as Calomel
enters into their composition I have no doubt of their
superior efficacy over any other diaphoretic preparation.

The present state of the world is such
that it is not possible to see the
future with any degree of certainty.
The only way to avoid this is to
live in the present and not to
worry about the future. The
future is not in our hands but
in the hands of God. We must
trust in Him and live our lives
in accordance with His will. The
only way to know His will is to
study His word and to pray for
His guidance. The only way to
live in the present is to be
content with what we have and
not to desire more. The only way
to avoid worry is to be at peace
with God and with our fellow
men. The only way to know
God is to love Him and to love
our neighbor as ourselves. The
only way to live is to live for
God and for our fellow men. The
only way to be happy is to be
at peace with God and with our
fellow men. The only way to
know the truth is to study the
word of God and to live by its
teachings. The only way to be
wise is to be at peace with God
and with our fellow men. The
only way to be good is to be at
peace with God and with our
fellow men. The only way to be
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